



Ocala NATIONAL FOREST



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Recreation Guide RB-RG355 February 2010

Stay on the Right Trail with Your OHV

The Ocala National Forest offers a variety of riding opportunities for off highway vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts. Trails are designed for slow speeds for riders to view and appreciate scenery and wildlife as well as to highlight the importance of conservation, forest management and history.

OHV trail status can change frequently. You should contact the local ranger district offices or visitor centers to learn site-specific and current information before heading out. Riders can also call 1-866-607-2016 for directions and trail information.

There are several different OHV trail opportunities available to riders:

The Ocala North OHV Trail offers 125 miles of trail:

- 14 miles of trail for motorcycles only
- 35 miles for motorcycles, all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and utility vehicles (UTVs) less than 50 inches wide
- 76 miles of classified "mixed use" trail, which means OHVs share the trail with licensed vehicles

The 16-mile Wandering Wiregrass Trail is a great family day ride through a longleaf pine wiregrass ecosystem. Motorcycles, ATVs, and UTVs less than 50 inches are allowed on the trail.

The Ocala Adventure Trail, currently 47 miles, offers a unique opportunity to view the Big Scrub ecosystem. This globally impaired ecosystem is the largest contiguous block of sand pine scrub in the world. The trail offers various day-use opportunities. Riders may park at one of the OHV parking corrals located at Farles Prairie, Blue Sink or Big Scrub Campground to access the trail. Available activities at Blue Sink and Farles Prairie include fishing, wading, picnicking

Use Your America the Beautiful Recreation Pass

If you are heading out for a relaxing, fun-filled vacation on a national forest, don't forget your America the Beautiful Interagency Pass. The America the Beautiful Program offers three distinct passes for use at designated federal recreation sites. Frequent visitors will find an interagency pass to be the best value, instead of paying fees at each site.

The Interagency Annual Pass costs \$80. It is an annual pass good for 12 months beyond the month of purchase. It admits the pass holder and any accompanying passengers in a private vehicle. For areas that charge a per-person fee, the pass admits the pass holder and three additional adults (age 16 and older). Two people can sign the pass.

The Interagency Senior Pass costs \$10. It is a lifetime pass for citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. age 62 or older. It admits the pass holder and any accompanying passengers in a private vehicle. For areas that charge a per-person fee, the pass admits the pass holder and three additional adults (age 16 and older).

The Interagency Access Pass is free. It is a lifetime pass for citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. who have a permanent disability, regardless of age. Passes must be obtained in person by providing proof of a medically determined permanent disability and proof of residency. It admits the pass holder and any accompanying passengers in a private vehicle. For areas that charge a per-person fee, the pass admits the pass holder and three additional adults (age 16 and older).



The Ocala National Forest, located in central Florida, covers approximately 385,000 acres and is the southernmost national forest in the continental United States. This unique, subtropical forest is rich in water resources with more than 600 lakes, rivers and springs. Four major natural springs of crystal clear water are located in the popular recreation areas of Juniper Springs, Salt Springs, Alexander Springs and Silver Glen Springs.

In contrast to the abundant water resources, the central portion of the Ocala is dry and sandy. This area, known as the Big Scrub, is the largest contiguous block of sand pine scrub ecosystem in the world. The scrub is host to numerous species such as the Florida scrub-jay, sand skink, scrub lizard, gopher tortoise, black bear, white-tailed deer, wild turkey and numerous plants.

The Ocala National Forest provides a variety of recreation, scenic and historic areas. The recreation activities are as diverse as the environment: canoeing in wilderness waterways, swimming in crystal-clear spring water at a constant 72 degrees, year-round camping, picnicking, fishing, birding, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and exploring trails with off-highway vehicles. Come explore your Ocala National Forest.



Store Your Food Properly

In order to protect the Florida black bear and other wildlife species, and to promote safe camping in bear country, the Forest Service implemented a Food Storage Order requiring proper storage and disposal procedures for food, garbage and other attractants. As outlined in the order, these items must be stored in an approved bear-resistant container, hard-topped vehicles or in "food hangs" when not in use.

Attractants include anything having an odor that may attract bears, such as food, beverages, cooking grease, toothpaste, toiletries, soap, game meat, pet food, livestock feed and garbage.

Ways to store food properly:

- Store all attractants inside an approved bear-resistant container or hard-topped vehicle. For more information visit www.igbconline.org/html/container.html. Hang all attractants at least 10 feet above ground and 4 feet from any vertical support. Discard all attractants in provided bear-resistant trash receptacles. DO NOT burn or bury any attractants and take out what you bring in.



Camp With a Group

Would you like to spend a night under the stars? The Ocala National Forest offers year-round camping with a variety of amenities and recreation opportunities. There are four group campgrounds where 50 to 150 people can enjoy the great outdoors together. Reservations for group camping can be made by calling the National Recreation Reservation Service at (877) 444-6777 or at www.recreation.gov.



Mill Dam

At Mill Dam Recreation Area you can swim and picnic in a picturesque setting. It was originally a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in the 1930s. Today visitors come here to swim and play along the 300-foot sandy beach and to picnic under the stately live oaks. A boat ramp is located adjacent to the day use area, for your launching convenience. Mill Dam can be reserved for group camping, for up to 150 people, from October 1 to March 15.



Enjoy Your National Forest Safely

When planning a trip to the forest, keep safety in mind. The most effective way to prevent accidents is to prepare for the trip. Learn about the area you are visiting, the weather and the terrain. Know your physical limits. Your safety is your responsibility. While visiting the Ocala National Forest please remember the following rules and safety information:

- Many recreation areas prohibit the use of alcohol. Signs are posted where alcohol is prohibited.
- Pets are allowed in all campgrounds and on trails, but must be on leashes no longer than six feet. Pets are not allowed in swimming or picnic day-use areas.
- General gun season is from November to January. During this time you are encouraged to wear blaze orange when recreating in the forest. For safety purposes campers must stay within designated camping areas during general gun season. For specific hunting dates, visit www.myfwc.com.
- Fireworks are prohibited throughout the forest. Do not set off fireworks or other explosives at campgrounds and other recreation sites.
- Obey all fire restrictions. Fires may be limited or prohibited at certain times.
- Within campgrounds and other recreation sites, build fires only in fire rings, stoves, grills or fireplaces provided for that purpose.
- Be sure your fire is completely extinguished before leaving. You are responsible for keeping fires under control.

■ Campgrounds and other recreation sites can be used only for recreation purposes. Permanent use or use as a principal residence without authorization is not allowed.

■ At least one person must occupy a camping area during the first night after camping equipment has been set up, unless permission has otherwise been granted by a forest ranger.

■ Do not leave camping equipment unattended for more than 24 hours without permission from a forest ranger. The Forest Service is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal property.

■ Remove all personal property and trash when leaving.

■ Quiet hours exist in and near most campgrounds. Quiet hours are between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Keep noise at a reasonable level and be considerate of fellow visitors.

■ Prevent pollution. Keep garbage, litter and foreign substances out of lakes, streams and other water.

■ Do not carve, chop, cut or damage any live trees.

■ Many wild animals live in the forest. Keep wildlife wild by throwing away your garbage and food, and by not feeding them.

■ All surface water, though it appears clear and cool, should be boiled for at least five minutes prior to drinking or using for food preparation.

Buck Lake

Buck Lake Group Use Area provides primitive camping for groups as large as 50. Campers have access to Buck Lake for fishing and boating. A maximum 20-horsepower motor is allowed on Buck Lake. Amenities are limited to one vault toilet, picnic tables and fire rings. There is a two-night minimum stay required for reserving this facility.

Doe Lake

Located on beautiful Doe Lake, this group-use campground can accommodate up to 250 people. The historic Doe Lake Dining Hall was restored in the 1990s and is a large room with a stage and picnic tables. Next to the dining area is a kitchen with refrigerators, large sinks, a serving area, microwaves, toasters and a small ice maker. Restroom facilities are located off the kitchen. All facilities at Doe Lake are wheelchair accessible. A bath house provides hot showers and flush toilets.

Lake Shore

Lake Shore Campground is a perfect place for as many as 50 people to enjoy a group activity or outing. Located on Fore Lake, groups will enjoy access to fishing, swimming and canoeing. In 2006 the bath house and picnic shelter were updated and provide hot showers and flush toilets. A two-night minimum stay on the weekends and a three-night minimum stay on holiday weekends is required to reserve this facility.

For smaller groups, camping is available at 17 campgrounds, four primitive areas, two cabins and in the general forest area. Individual campsites are on a first-come, first-served basis. All camping is limited to 14 days within a 30 day period unless posted otherwise. Reservations for some campgrounds, group use areas and cabins can be made by calling the National Recreation Reservation Service at (877) 444-6777 or at www.recreation.gov.



Lake Dorr

If you are looking for a beautiful lakefront setting with fishing, swimming and boating access, spend a night or a few days at Lake Dorr Campground. The remodeled bath house with hot showers and flush toilets is located on the shores of Lake Dorr, near the beach and large picnicking area. Boaters and anglers will appreciate the boat ramp for lake access, and a fishing pier to reel in crappie or bass.

Lake Dorr is open year round and camping is on a first-come, first-served basis. Campsites can accommodate tents, trailers and RVs up to 35 feet. Each site includes a parking spur, grill, picnic table and lantern post. The maximum stay is 14 days in a 30 day period in the summer, and 30 days in a 45 day period in the winter. Campsites have no electric, water or sewer hookups. User fees are charged for camping, swimming and launching a boat.

Take a Hike

If you are looking to explore the Ocala National Forest by foot, you will find many opportunities. Trails let you visit historic sites, discover unique geological features and explore wilderness areas. Hiking opportunities range from short walks on an interpretive nature trail to longer hikes along the Florida National Scenic Trail.



Call if You Need More Information

The Ocala National Forest is open year-round. The Lake George and Seminole district offices are open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The offices are closed on all federal holidays. The Salt Springs, Ocklawaha and Pittman visitor center hours vary due to season. Please call a visitor center before heading out to ensure it is open. **Website:** <http://fs.usda.gov/ocala>

Lake George Ranger District
17147 E. State Road 40
Silver Springs FL 34488
(352) 625-2520

Ocklawaha Visitor Center
3199 NE CR 315
Silver Springs FL 34488
(352) 236-0288

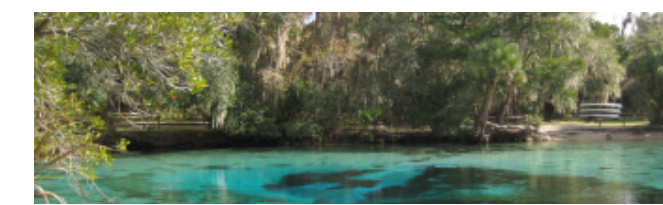


Be Prepared for Your Visit

One of the most important preparations before any forest outing is to learn about your destination. You can visit the forest website at <http://fs.usda.gov/ocala> or call a district office or visitor center.

Forest Service personnel and volunteers can provide current and site-specific information. Before you leave, make sure to let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. It is often best to travel with a companion in case of an emergency situation.

For minor cuts and bruises, bring along a first aid kit. Understand basic first aid and be able to identify the symptoms of heat exhaustion, heat stroke and dehydration. Make sure your physical condition meets the requirements for the activity you are planning. There is a big difference between a one-mile hike and a 10-mile hike. Check the equipment you plan to use before you leave home to make sure it is in good working order. Florida weather changes constantly so bring clothes that will withstand the elements. Remember, rainstorms can creep up unexpectedly on summer afternoons.



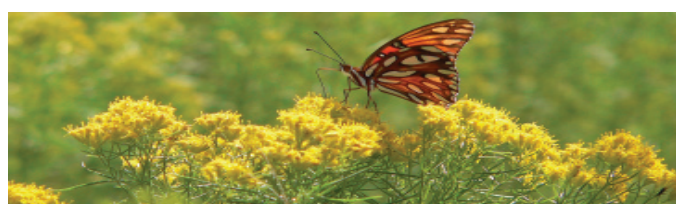
Respect the Wildlife

Wildlife on the Ocala National Forest ranges from mammals to insects to amphibians. All of these creatures play a role in our ecosystem. Please help us keep wildlife wild by not feeding or bothering them. If fed, they are likely to start relying on humans for food and may become aggressive.

Many animals have the ability to inflict serious injury on people, and some, like alligators and bears, in rare instances have the potential to kill. Slowly back away from an animal that is a potential threat. Do not swim outside of posted swimming areas.

Mosquitoes, ticks and other biting insects are common in the forest. Some insects, such as ticks, can transmit diseases. Insect repellent is a must in the summer months. Wear light-colored clothing and avoid dark colors, especially blues and greens which attract insects more than other colors. For restful sleep during mosquito season, bring a screened tent.

In Florida there are 45 snake species but only six are venomous. On the Ocala the four venomous snakes are the cottonmouth, eastern diamondback rattlesnake, dusky pygmy rattlesnake and the eastern coral snake. If you find a snake, the best thing to do is leave it alone. If you are bitten by a venomous snake, you need to be treated and administered antivenom. Stay calm and seek immediate medical attention at the nearest hospital or medical facility.



TRAIL NAME DISTANCE WHAT YOU'LL SEE

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Salt Springs Trail	1.5 mile loop	Leads to a wildlife observation platform.
St. Francis Trail	7 mile (blue blazes) 3 mile (yellow-blazed)	Traverses six ecosystems to St. Francis, a once-thriving river port.
Lake Eaton Sinkhole Trail	1.0 or 1.7 miles	Leads to a 450 ft. diameter sinkhole and 80 ft. deep observation platform.
Lake Eaton Loop Trail	2.1- mile loop	Follows Lake Eaton's east shore, with three observation platforms along the way.
Davenport Landing Trail	1.1 miles	Leads to a former 19th century port and fuel-wood stop for Ocklawaha River boats.
Juniper Springs Nature Trail (located inside Juniper Springs Recreation Area)	0.4 mile	Provides a boardwalk from Juniper Run to Fern Hammock Springs. Features spring boils and semi-tropical vegetation.
Timucuan Trail (located inside Alexander Springs Recreation Area)	1.1- mile loop trail	Offers interpretive signs, semi-tropical vegetation and wildlife observation platforms along Alexander Springs Run.
Pat's Island and the Yearling Trail	6-mile loop or 2 loops at 3 miles each	Visits several historical points that inspired Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to write <i>The Yearling</i> .
Spring Boils Trail (located inside Silver Glen Springs Recreation Area)	1.75 miles	Leads to an observation platform where hikers can view spring boils.
Lake George Trail (located inside Silver Glen Springs Recreation Area)	2 miles	Follow a path through semi-tropical vegetation to the shore of Lake George, the second largest lake in Florida.
Florida National Scenic Trail (See map for access points)	66 miles	Allows access at various trailheads throughout the forest.

